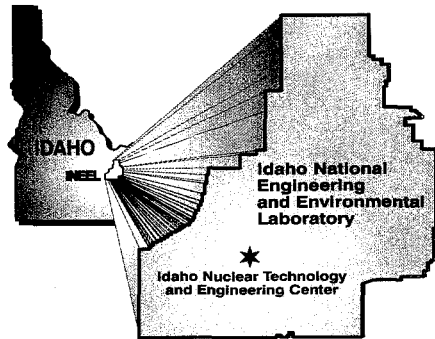


NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY***Agencies propose removing water from old INEEL spent fuel basin to remove potential risk to aquifer***

The U.S. Department of Energy, in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, is seeking public comment through September 3 on a proposal to empty 1950's-era spent nuclear fuel basins at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory. Removing the water and sludge would remove a potential threat to the Snake River Plain Aquifer.

An Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis document available on the Web at cleanup.inel.gov describes the proposal to remove more than 1.5 million gallons of water from three interconnected basins at the

Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center.

The agencies are proposing the work as a non-time critical removal action under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA, otherwise known as Superfund).

The proposal for closing the 603 basins evaluates several alternatives. The alternatives range from a No Action alternative to complete removal of the basin structure. Some alternatives include sludge removal or treatment in-place through grouting, with pumping the water to the ICDF evaporation ponds. The preferred alternative includes removal and disposal of the basin water and sludge, while grouting debris in place. Grout would be pumped in as water is removed to maintain the water level. Doing so eliminates the risk of residual contamination on the basin wall becoming airborne.

Written comments on DOE's plan can be submitted online at <http://cleanup.inel.gov> or mailed to:

Kathleen Hain
U.S. Department of Energy
P.O. Box 1625 MS 1222
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83415-1222
hainke@id.doe.gov

Detailed information is available in the Administrative Record file for Operable Unit 3-13. The Administrative Record is located at the DOE Reading Room of the INEEL Technical Library in Idaho Falls. Copies can be found at Albertsons Library on the Boise State University campus. The Administrative Record can also be accessed via the Internet at <http://ar.inel.gov/>.

A public meeting is currently planned for 7 p.m. August 19 in the Idaho Falls Room at the Shilo Inn on Lindsay Boulevard in Idaho Falls.

Under the DOE's Performance Management Plan for accelerating cleanup at INEEL, the department is working to reduce risk and complete the majority of remaining cleanup work from past INEEL missions by 2012. The project is managed by Bechtel BWXT Idaho for the U.S. Department of Energy.



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